

NEW JERSEY

2000-2001

Guidelines and
ApplicationBEST
PRACTICES**Deadline for Application to County Office:**
NOVEMBER 27, 2000

The Best Practices application is a public document. The information that you provide will serve as the official record. Review the application prior to submission to ensure accuracy and adherence to the guidelines. Type or keyboard information requested on this page and page 2, if applicable.

Category	<u>Social Studies</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Who Shot JFK?</u>	
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>1</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	<u>Bergen</u>		
District (Proper Name)	<u>Bergen County Technical School District</u>		
Address	<u>327 East Ridgewood Avenue</u> Street/P. O. Box <u>City Paramus, NJ</u> Zip Code <u>07652</u>		
Telephone	<u>201-225-1760</u>	Fax <u>201-225-9693</u>	Email <u>johgri@bergen.org</u>
Chief School Administrator	<u>John Grieco, Ed.D., Superintendent</u>		
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	<u>Bergen County Academies</u>		
Address	<u>200 Hackensack Avenue</u> Street/P. O. Box <u>City Hackensack, NJ</u> Zip Code <u>07601</u>		
Telephone	<u>201-343-0165</u>	Fax <u>201-343-8884</u>	Email <u>carlis@bergen.org</u>
Principal	<u>Carol A. Lisa</u>		
Program Developer(s)	<u>Richard Panicucci</u>		
Application Prepared By	<u>Richard Panicucci</u>		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<u>[Signature]</u>		

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLYApproved: ☒ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature[Signature]

**NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2000-2001 APPLICATION**

Application Requirements: Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

1. **RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS and ACCURATE.** No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements
2. **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
3. Application must be **keybaorded on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used.** (This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.)
4. **KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to all the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages.** Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for accuracy and clarity.
5. The information on page 4 and the responses to statements must be copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
6. The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
7. The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 27, 2000, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>Who Shot JFK?</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	_____	Number of Schools with Practice <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	_____	Number of Districts with Practice _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School	_____	Location <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High School	<u>9-12</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	_____	

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual Education and Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement	
	(family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.
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1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

“Who Shot JFK?” is an interdisciplinary project in which students work in an investigative team to analyze what actually happened in Dallas on November 22, 1963 when the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, was murdered. Students use a wide variety of research tools to search for and organize clues, as well as to reconstruct the events of that historic day in Texas based on their hypothesis. An important component of this practice is student collaboration with one another, as well as outreach with experts and witnesses from The Federal Bureau of Investigation, The Central Intelligence Agency, The National Archives, and the Bergen County Medical Examiner to solve the most infamous case in our nation’s history.

The **“Who Shot JFK?”** project seeks to address the following content and process objectives:

- To assess the accuracy of several previous investigations to include, but not be limited to, the Warren Report, Jim Garrison Case, and the House Select Committee on Assassinations.
- To articulate the various forces at work in the world during the Cold War.
- To develop techniques for asking probing and leading questions that lead to critical thought and analysis.
- To develop strategies for effective telecollaboration via e-mail, online forums tele/videoconferencing.
- To articulate simple and complex concepts of forensic pathology and ballistics.
- To state and defend team views to large/small audiences and construct persuasive arguments in defense of a viewpoint.

The **“Who Shot JFK?”** project is innovative because it allows students to interpret history first-hand, harness what technology can offer in the area of research, and learn in an interdisciplinary, problem-based environment. By interviewing individuals who were themselves part of this history, students gain an insight far beyond the reach of textbooks. The practice is innovative because it relies on student motivation and commitment to research. For example, one group actually interviewed retired FBI Special Agent, James P. Hosty who worked in the Bureau’s Dallas office in 1963. Because he conducted surveillance of Oswald months prior to the assassination, Hosty was one of the first law enforcement officers to interrogate Lee Harvey Oswald just hours after the shooting. The combination of student, adult-witness interaction promoted high student accountability. Technology now allows students to also see the link and interrelation between history, biology, pathology, law, etc. The solving of a mystery becomes high drama in the classroom and history becomes real. Learning is active and student centered. The aforementioned innovative techniques intrinsically energize students to achieve beyond their own expectations. Students begin the project with a superficial background of the Cold War and vague convictions of what happened on November 22nd. They complete this journey by constructing a very detailed theatrical presentation that explains every step of this tragedy. Because the audience consists of peers, parents, and invited community members, students have a heightened sense to do more than interpret history. They passionately defend their perspective, and back these interpretations, as though they were called before an investigative panel like the Warren Commission.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.*

Responsible schools strive to make learning real and relevant to the lives of their students. In history class, students have an opportunity to give input as to how they would like to study required topics. Universally, students want to do meaningful work, in-depth that is void of teacher lecture and repetition. The *Who Shot JFK?* project strives to meet the simple but critical student needs by taking an event in history and requiring students to research using technology. Since most students today are computer literate, this practice is enthusiastically met by students each year. By using online research to solve a complex problem, instructors create a rich learning environment that is both fascinating and relevant to the student. The second way the *“Who Shot JFK?”* project achieves connectivity to curriculum standards is by making learning a social and collaborative process. Most teens have a strong desire to be needed by peers. Using cooperative models makes each student’s contribution a valued team commodity. Since students acquire learning through productive socialization, friendship and learning go hand in hand. Likewise, the project satisfies a school’s obligation to break down classroom walls and have the student view member of the outside community as mentors and teachers. *“Who Shot JFK?”* project gives students an inside look at key government agencies as partners in learning and as potential careers.

The following *NJ Core Curriculum and Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards* include:

Standard 1: *All students will develop career planning and workplace readiness skills.* By working side by side with officials from government agencies like the FBI as well as forensic experts, students begin evaluating civil service and more specifically law enforcement as careers. This exposure may result in a change of the student’s vocational plans.

Standard 2: *All students will use technology information and other tools.* By using the technology used in most schools as a vehicle to gather evidence and eventually solve historic mysteries, students begin to see computers as critical learning tools instead of toys. Additionally, knowledge of how to use technology to enhance the learning in any particular situation is a life skill all students need beyond the classroom.

Standard 3: *All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.* The cognitive process of searching for clues, organizing them, and synthesizing information, forming a hypothesis, and arriving at consensus is as critical a thinking process as you can find.

Standard 4: *All students will demonstrate self-management skills.* Within each of the investigative teams, students must organize themselves, motivate each other to work diligently, meet deadlines, prepare for cooperative quizzes, write and perform. Each requires self-management. Cross Content Standards met are as follows;

Standard 1.3: *All students will utilize art elements and art media to produce artistic products and performances.* This standard is fulfilled by students writing and performing a theatrical presentation from their original theory on who shot John F. Kennedy and performing it before an audience of peers and invited guests.

Standard 3.4: *All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.* Students achieve this by analyzing primary documents from a minimum of five different federal investigations.

Standard 5.6: *All students will gain an understanding of structure, basic characteristics, and needs of organisms.* The practice encourages work with medical examiners, who have welcomed the

interaction with students, to interpret autopsies provides students with an overview of the human anatomy as well as basic forensic pathology.

Standard 5.9: *All students will gain an understanding of the natural laws as they apply to motion, forces, and energy transformations.* Students achieve this objective by using ballistics and forensic pathology to solve this case.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

Students involved in the “**Who Shot JFK?**” project are assessed in a variety of ways that are both comprehensive and equitable. There are four criteria of equal weight to insure that no student, no matter what his/ her learning style, is deprived of the opportunity to demonstrate achievement. The criteria for assessment are an ongoing investigative journal, discussion and questioning, a cooperative quiz competition, and the final theatrical presentation. These aforementioned assessment tools encourage cooperation, consensus, team and individual accountability, and healthy competition. The investigative journal is worth twenty-five percent of the student’s grade and is an important criterion of the project experience. Keeping an on going daily journal of latest case conclusions, as well as documenting key pieces of evidence, helps students learn to organize thoughts in a large-scale project. In addition, it allows the students and teachers to reflect back on that student’s thought process throughout the entire investigation. Journals are assessed on a one to twenty-five point scale with the following criteria: clarity, mechanics, content, and deductive reasoning.

The “**Who Shot JFK?**” project requires the continual active participation of the student. This is especially true when it comes to contributions during investigative meetings, when students from the Medical Evidence, Multimedia Evidence, Warren Commission, H.S.C.A., and Garrison teams get together and share the clues that they have uncovered that day. This exercise gives each team the opportunity to bring its expertise to the investigation as a whole. Students are assessed at each of these sessions based on how frequently and how well they contribute to the discussion. In addition, students are also assessed on how comprehensively they probe the experts and witnesses from the government agencies. The level of probing helps students and teachers evaluate the content that has been absorbed, as well as the communication skills individual students have developed.

The most critical and authentic component of the assessment rubric is the cooperative quiz competition. Students work in peer coaching sessions to prepare members of their teams to take objective style quizzes on the previous day’s discoveries. Students prepare as a team, but take quizzes individually. The teacher then computes an average of each team’s quiz scores and adds that average to the team’s running cumulative score. This assessment tool tracks the student’s ability to motivate, monitor, and assess others. In addition, the teacher can also evaluate the individual’s mastery of the content objectives. This model encourages hard work and responsibility because each student’s contribution helps the team’s grade as a whole.

The final presentation is the last twenty-five percent of the student’s grade. This event serves as an exhibition of learning as well as an assessment of content and process objectives. Upon coming to an agreement as an investigative team, the students construct a theatrical presentation of their findings

which is performed before peers, teachers, parents, and invited guests. These presentations include drama as well as multimedia. The students are assessed on how well they have articulated a theory as well as on the application of the evidence uncovered. The audience assists the teacher in scoring the students on their clarity, creativity, use of technology, and mastery of content.

The combination of these assessment tools allows for different learning modalities and provides a rubric model for other projects. Students are active participants, continually know of their progress, strive to improve the motivation of themselves and peers, and combine multi-discipline skills as a final exhibition.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

This exciting and innovative project is easy to replicate. Any instructor with access to a computer and the internet could integrate the **“Who Shot JFK?”** model to any significant historical occurrence that veils itself in mystery long after the event occurred. Making history come alive, requiring students to become active participants in their learning, mandating high level thinking skills and product excellence, should be the goal of every social studies instructor in every classroom. **“Who Shot JFK?”** is a simple template that can be adapted into any learning environment from middle school through the collegiate level.